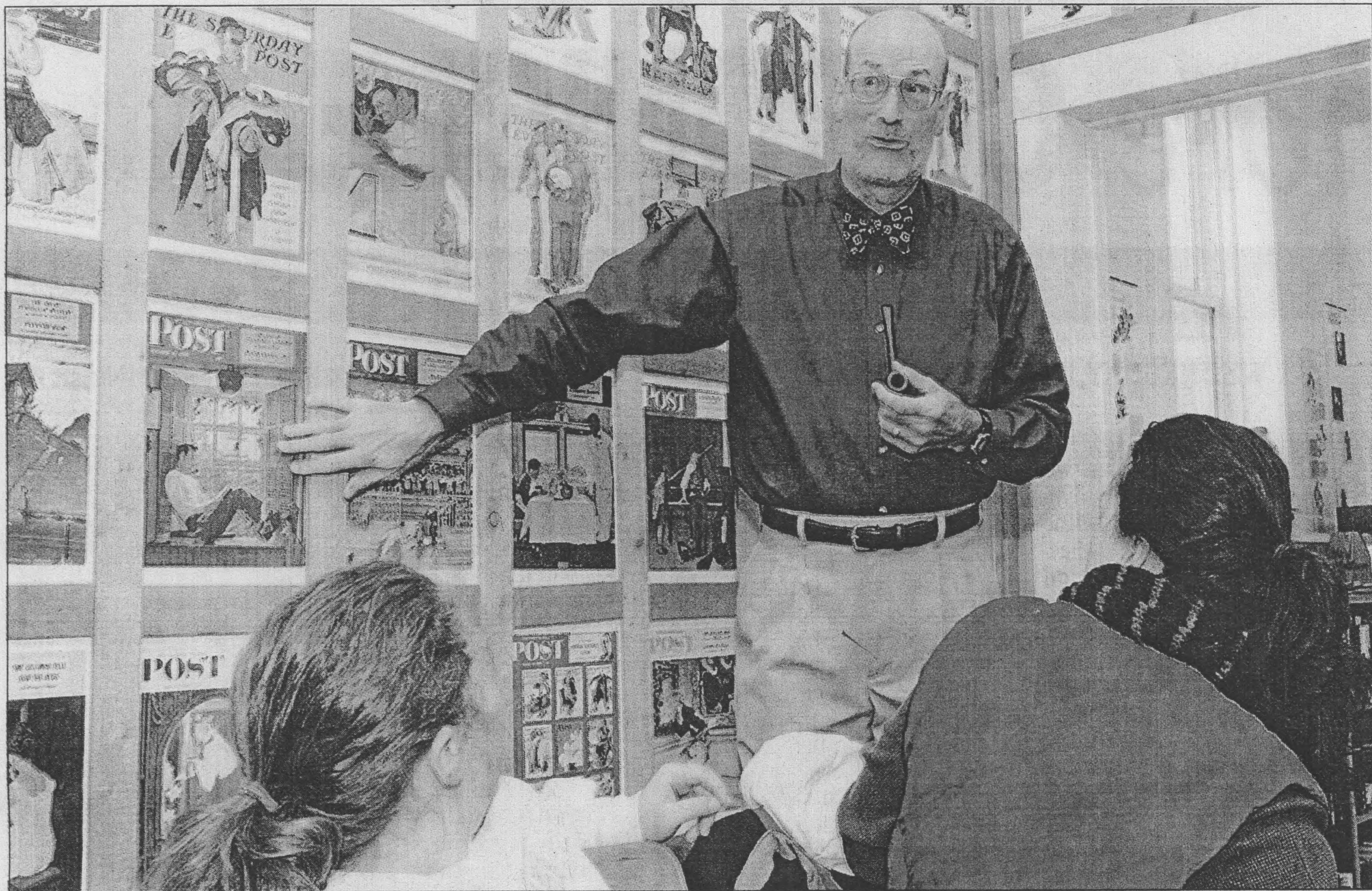


Norman Rockwell revisited



Sue Pischke/LSC

Tony Berken portrays Norman Rockwell as he talks about his favorite *Saturday Evening Post* illustrations during the Norman Rockwell Weekend at The Old School's Norman Rockwell Center in Mishicot. Listening are Luceena Wentland, left, and her sister, Nichole Rabitz, of Manitowoc. The Old School has one of the largest displays of Norman Rockwell art in Wisconsin, according to owners Craig and Mary Berken.

Mishicot celebrates beloved artist

By Kevin Braley

Gannett Wisconsin Newspapers

MISHICOT — Melvin Kliment has never stopped learning at The Old School in Mishicot.

Kliment, 65, was a student when the building was a school, and later worked there as a teacher. On Saturday, Kliment returned as a student of Norman Rockwell — the artist famous for his Saturday Evening Post covers. Rockwell illustrated the covers for almost 50 years. He died in 1978.

"I was obviously aware of his paintings," Kliment, of Mishicot,

On the Web

The Old School: www.oldschoolgifts.com

said, "but I didn't know much about his life. This has stimulated an interest to learn more."

This is the fourth year the Norman Rockwell Weekend has been held at The Old School, 315 Elizabeth St. The Old School has one of the largest displays of Norman Rockwell art in Wisconsin, according to owners Craig and Mary Berken. Last year, the Mishicot Area Growth and Improvement Committee became involved with the event to expand Norman Rockwell Week-

end in the community.

On Friday and Saturday, Tony Berken of Green Bay — Craig's brother — portrayed Rockwell and spoke about the artist's life.

Tony Berken immersed himself in the life of Rockwell after his brother asked him to be a presenter during the event. This weekend marked his second year of involvement.

"I thought it was very good and effective," Kliment said. "It's not just a lecture; it's a trip through history."

Tony Berken has read books, magazine articles and watched videos about Rockwell's life,

learning about his upbringing, his work ethic, his generosity and his love for people. He said Rockwell's paintings have brought a message of hope and a smile to faces of millions of Americans.

"His art is timeless," Tony Berken said.

Mary and Craig Berken admit they didn't know much about Rockwell until they bought The Old School about 3 ½ years ago. The previous owners, Lyle and Carole Anderson, were Rockwell enthusiasts and sold the exhibit along with the building.

Kevin Braley writes for the Herald Times Reporter, Manitowoc.